

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 MCT-01 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /090 W
-----077702 011909Z /70

P R 281021Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1686
INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LUGOS
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0563

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV RH UK BC
SUBJ: RHODESIA: GOB THINKING

1. TOP GOB OFFICIALS REFLECTED ON RHODESIAN SITUATION AS OF
FEB 27 AT SOCIAL OCCASION DURING VISIT OF LEWIS MACFARLANE,
AFS DEPUTY DIRECTOR. THE FOUR WERE: L.M.(JOE) LEGWAILA,
PRESIDENT KHAMA'S SENIOR PRIVATE SECRETARY (POLITICAL);
PHIL STEENKAMP, CABINET SECRETARY; M. CHARLES TIBONE, ADMIN-
ISTRATIVE SECRETARY TO PRESIDENT; AND LEBANG M. MPOTOKWANE,
PERMSEC, MINEXTAFF, AND ACTING MINISTER IN MOGWE'S ABSENCE.
THEIR COMMENTS CAME IN THE WAKE OF REPORTS OF NKOMO-MUGABE
PRESS CONFERENCE AT MAPUTO AND PUBLIC OR PRIVATE CONDEMNATION
BY THREE OTHER FRONTLINE STATES OF SALISBURY INTERNAL SETTLE-
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MENT TALKS.

2. THREE POINTS STAND OUT IN THE GOB REACTION: FIRST, GOB IS
CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT IT IS STANDING ALONE, APART FROM ITS
FRONTLINE BROTHERS. AS MPOTOKWANE SAID, "WE'VE BEEN IN THIS
POSITION BEFORE, AND IT DOES NOT BOTHER US." THERE IS NO INDI-
CATION THE GOB WILL CHANGE ITS WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE DESPITE

FRONTLINE PRESSURE; SECOND, THEY UNANIMOUSLY SPOKE OF HOSTILE NKOMO/MUGABE PRESS CONFERENCE REACTION AS A SIGN "THEY ARE WORRIED" -- A FACT THAT ALSO DOES NOT PRODUCE IN GOB ANY INCLINATION TO RELIEVE THEM OF CONCERN. THIRD, THEY DOUBT WHETHER NKOMO WOULD EVER SEE IT IN HIS INTEREST TO JOIN THE SALISBURY TALKS, AND RATHER PESSIMISTICALLY EXPECT "THE CHAPS WITH THE GUNS" TO CONTINUE FIGHTING SOMEONE, COME WHAT MAY.

3. EVENTS HAVE THUS CAST GOB IN A NEW ROLE, ONE WHICH APPEARS TO BE CLOSER TO THE US THAN THAT OF ANY OTHER FRONTLINE OR AFRICAN COUNTRY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GABORO00563
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780094-0213
Format: TEL
From: GABORONE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978025/aaaaadpp.tel
Line Count: 74
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 82c6f2d8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3579859
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: GOB THINKING
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK, BC, (LEGWAILA, LM JOE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/82c6f2d8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014